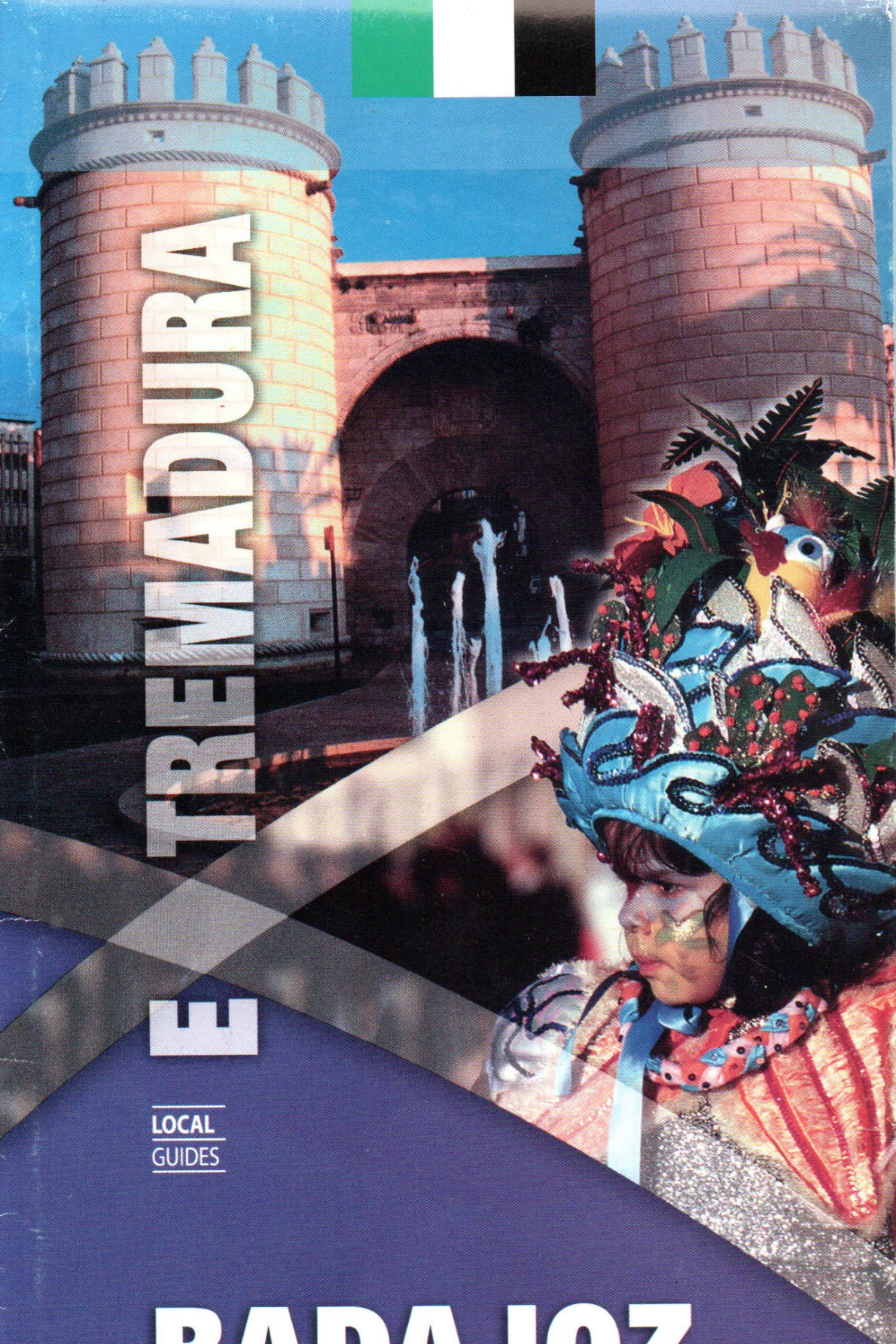


EXTREMADURA

LOCAL GUIDES

BADAJOZ

JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

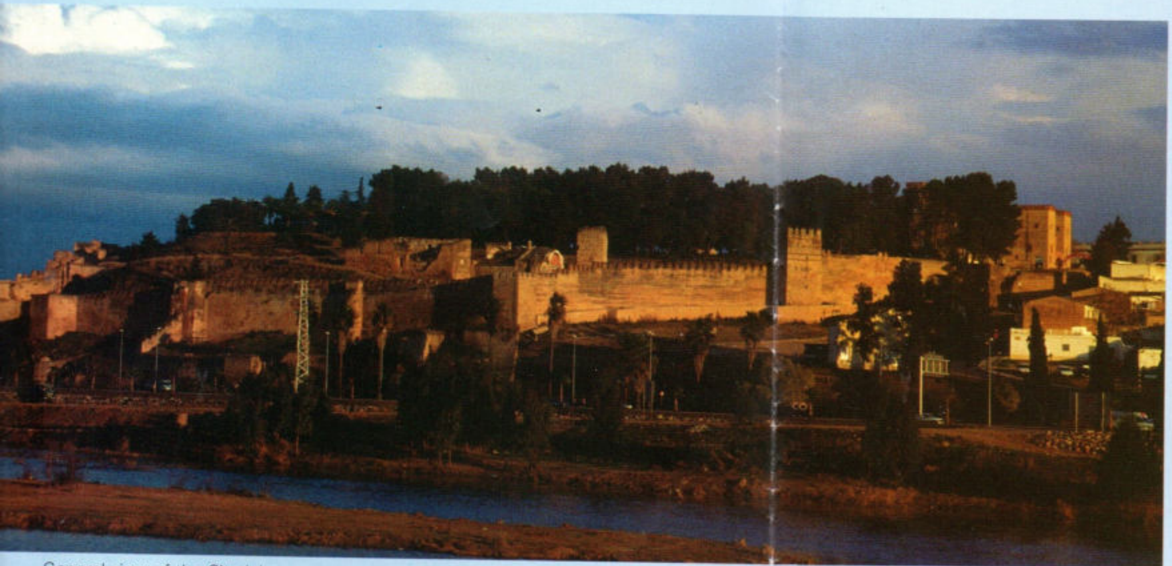
BADAJOZ

SOME HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY

Since Palaeolithic, the city of Badajoz and its surroundings have been the favourite places for the establishment of several cultures and Pre Roman villages, specially in Bronze - Iron Ages, as some discoveries demonstrate.

Numerous agricultural Pre Roman villages such as «La Cocosa», one of the best ones in the Iberian Peninsula or "Las Tomas", in the outskirts of Badajoz, demonstrate an important presence of the zone in Roman time. That fact has made some authors think that Badajoz, at the foot of Guadiana river, could have been an important nucleus in Lusitania which became stronger during the Visigoth domination.

Different Moorish texts deal with Ibn Marwan. He is thought to be the founder of Badajoz in 875 and he chose "Al Basharnal" for it, place located opposite La Muela, at the other side of Guadiana river, in the famous San Cristobal Fort.



General view of the Citadel



Extremaduran and Latin American Museum of Contemporary Art. MEIAC



Golf course

After the fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba, Badajoz would become one of the most important taifas reigns in the peninsula. Therefore, some centuries later, it will become place of conquers and reconquers between Muslims and Christians until 19th March 1230, when king Alfonso IX de León conquered the Muslim king Abenhut once and for all with the help of the Military Orders of Alcántara and Santiago.

This city was marked during Middle Ages either due to the Castilian civil wars in XIII and XIV centuries or due to the frontier situation with the Portuguese lands, which caused several war confrontations between Spanish and Portuguese people in XVII century and the enlargement of the wall zones with the Vauban system, which provided a defensive, strategic character to the city and obliged to live outside until XX century.

Paradoxically, some centuries later and also nowadays, Badajoz has become a link between Extremadura and Spain with the nearby country and main nucleus in the land communications with Portugal.

The growth of the emblematic city and the booming university life in the capital have made Badajoz be the most populous urban nucleus in Extremadura, which possesses an extensive, admirable, artistic-historical cultural heritage. All that makes Badajoz be an attractive, charming city as a result of the secular contribution of numerous cultures.

THE CITADEL

This emblematic place, inhabited since Prehistory, would attach strategic, military importance over all when Ibn Marwan established in this "Cerro de la Muelas" at the end of IX century, with the emir of Córdoba Muhamed I ´s permission.

Abu Yacub Yusuf, Almohade caliph who lived in Seville, ordered the Citadel to be built in 1169, as it is known nowadays. Therefore, it became one of the most important ones of the Iberian Peninsula due to its strategic, defensive situation. It was walled in Almohade time, most part of it with several restorations after that.

The towers of quadrangular shape which reinforce the paintings of the wall, the one of the Atalaya, known as "Espantaperros", dated back to Almohade time, although the bell tower at the top of it dates back to XVI century, have become a marvellous emblem in Badajoz nowadays.

The door of Capitel stands out among the famous doors known as Coraxa, Carros and Alpéndiz. The name of Capitel has its origin in the Roman capital that is built at the top of the Horseshoe Arch in the main entrance.

This Citadel would possess three mosques. One of them would become a Christian temple called Santa María del Castillo until XIX century. In 1931 The Citadel of Badajoz was declared Monumento Histórico- Artístico (Artistic Historic Monument).



Espantaperros Tower



Façade of the Citadel



Inb Marwan, founder of the city



Soledad´s hermitage



Main facade of Carmelitas´convent



San Andres´church

CHURCHES AND CONVENTS

The configuration of the exterior of the city obliged the construction of convents and churches around the cathedral that gradually have gone away from the guidance and proximity of the main Christian temple of Badajoz in order to built the Fine Arts Museums and Puerta de Palmas. Most part of these buildings date back to XVI and XVII centuries. The monuments located near the Cathedral are the following:

Carmelitas´s Convent

It stands in the street called Arco Agüero, original building built in XIII century, enlarged and finished by the bishop Amador Merino Malaguilla in XVIII century.

Los Remedios´ Convent

It is known as "Nuestra Señora de la Paz" as well and is situated in San Pedro de Alcántara street, where El Salvador´s church stood in XIII century as well as Concepción´s church will do later.

San Andrés´church

This church stands between San Blas and Madre de Dios streets, dated back to XIII century and restored later in XVIII century. It possesses a beautiful altarpiece made in XVI century with paintings on panels, situated in the Gospel, with clear influences of the artist Luis de Morales´ disciples.

Concepción´s church

It is located in San Juan street and this Church of San Gabriel´s convent has been known as "Los Gabrieles´church" since XVIII century, built thanks to Mr. Gómez Hernández de Solís and his wife, Mrs. Catalina de Silva in XVI century. The following religious buildings stand out among the buildings around the Fine Arts Museum:

Soledad´s church

It stands in the middle of Soledad Square and on the corner with Duque de San Germán street. This old church, which dates back to XVII century and was built thanks to the Duke of San Germán, possesses an admirable image of Virgen de la Soledad, Patron Saint of this magnificent city.

San Agustín´s Church

It is a church built over another one, the former San Lorenzo´s church where the "agustinos" moved in XV century. The two naves, the one of the Gospel and the one of the Epistle are covered by vaults with Gothic arch ribs where there are numerous chapels and some burials of the nobility dated back to XVIII century. In this church, see of Santo Enterramiento ´s brotherhood, the rests of the Duke of Badajoz, Fernando Gómez de Solís can be found.

Santa Ana´s Church

It is located in Santa Ana and Duque de San Germán streets and was founded by Leonor de Vega at the beginning of XVI century and Felipe II´s wife, Queen Ana de Austria, who died in it in October 1580. Inside it, an interesting Mudejar cloister built in XVI century is decorated with frescoes paintings by Clemente García Mures.

Descalzas´ Convent

It was built in Menacho street thanks to the economic help of the bishop of Badajoz, Marín de Rodezno in 1700 for some lands which belonged to captain Sebastián Montero de Espinosa.

The convent possesses Cristo de la Amargura´s brotherhood which devotes Cristo de la Amargura and Virgen de la Amargura, both images dated back to XVIII century.

Santo Domingo´s Church

It stands in Santo Domingo street and belonged to the former Santo Domingo´s Convent in XVI century. Nazareno and Virgen de los Dolores, who give their name to the brotherhood, are venerated there. At the beginning of XVII century, it was founded by the tailor ´s association of Nuestro Padre Jesús del Amparo.



Santo Convento´s church



Las Descalzas convent



Concepción´s church

MUSEUMS

Provincial Fine Arts Museum

It was built in Meléndez Valdés street in 1979 and it is divided into four floors.

It possesses over a thousand catalogued pieces, of which an interesting sculptures and paintings realist Extremaduran collection, dated back to 1850-1900, and paintings dated back to 1900-1950 stand out. Furthermore, there are excellent examples of the magnificent Extremaduran painters Luis de Morales and Zurbarán.

Extremaduran and Latin American Museum of Contemporary Art (MEIAC)

It stands in one of the bastions of the wall, the so-called "Pardaleras" and inaugurated in 1995, was built using the former prison of Badajoz with the idea of creating a point of meeting with the cultures of Latin America and Portugal.

Museum of the City

It is situated in San Pedro de Alcántara street, in the former Luis de Morales´ House. This innovative place has as main objective the knowledge of the past and future aspects of this marvellous city.

Bullfighting Museum of the Extremaduran Bullfighting Club

It was founded in the middle of XX century and is situated in the old part of Badajoz, it possesses graphic, photographical materials of unquestionable bullfighting-historical value . Therefore, it is one of the best museums in Spain and the only one in Extremadura nowadays.



Inside the archaeological Museum



A Juan Barjola painting (MEIAC)



Fine Arts Museum



Inside Extremaduran and Latin American Museum of Contemporary Art

MONUMENTOS

PALACE OF THE DUKES OF LA ROCA

It is situated outside the Moorish Citadel, and this beautiful palace was the Dukes of Roca´s residence during XVI century. Therefore, it became seat of the Provincial Archaeological Museum after a magnificent restoration.

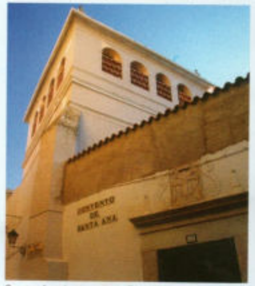
The didactic and appropriated distribution and presentation of its pieces, selected among thousands of them, found and rescued in the province and capital of Badajoz, stand out in this impressive, interesting Provincial Museum.

This important pieces are distributed in different levels and floors that date back from Prehistory to Moorish domination time, with special mention to beautiful Roman discoveries.

An important library and several special laboratories of restoration and photographed materials for its cataloguing complement this Museum.



Palace of the Duques of La Roca, current Provincial Archaeological Museum



Santa Ana´s convent Façade



Visigothic rests, room of the Archaeological Museum

PLAZA ALTA AND PLAZA DE SAN JOSÉ

They were luckily rebuilt and restored in these latest years and these squares have conserved the attractiveness that they had as authentic neuralgic centres of a city which lived surrounded by the walls of the Citadel. The beautiful porches still possesses examples of Mudejar art and artistic features dated back to the following centuries.

Beautiful and narrow streets with lots of nooks with a typical medieval design, come up in these impressive squares.



Parcial view of Plaza Alta



View of San José´s Square from the wall

THE CATHEDRAL

When Alfonso IX de León conquered the city, Badajoz became see. The building site of the new cathedral began with Alfonso X "El Sabio" ´s approval by its first bishop, Fray Pedro Pérez.

This cathedral was not finished for good until XVIII century, even though it was almost finished in XV century. It was built over a former Visigoth or Mozarabic temple and it offers a clear aspect of a fortress.

This building possesses the shape of a Latin cross and three naves and a transept, but the vaults which lean on cruciform pillars with adjacent columns possess the shape of a simple cross.

Inside it we can admire the Altar Mayor with a golden altarpiece made of wood by Ginés López dated back to XIX century and several chapels with a great artistic interest as well as the sacristy, a cloister and the crypt. The Chorus, which stands in the central nave, was made by a Berruguete ´s disciple called Jerónimo de Valencia.

The interesting Cathedral Museum offers interesting panels from XVI century by Luis de Morales and Bocanegra among other magnificent painters and value gold and silver works, alabaster, marbles, etc which date back to XVI and XIX century.

Outside it we can admire its beautiful tower and the main entrance finished in classical style, although it was started at the beginning of XVII century.



Cathedral of Badajoz, bell tower



One of the windows of the cathedral



Cathedral, set of chairs of the chorus



Cathedral, altarpiece

BRIDGES, DOORS AND WALLS

The frontier situation of Badajoz has influenced in its configuration for centuries, with the construction of walls, doors and bridges that make up an attractive, tourist, cultural route for the city nowadays. Some doors of access of those that this city had, are still conserved with the names of nearby localities such as Mérida or Jerez, although they are well-known with other names. It is the case of Puerta Pilar or the emblematic Puerta de Palmas, which is the most famous one among people from Badajoz and visitants to the city with two towers battlemented of circular shape and decorated with decorative features from XVI century.

The well known "Puerta de Palmas", emblem of the city, offers a beautiful triumph arch dated back to Renaissance time dedicated to Carlos I. It stands opposite Puente de Palmas, built in XVI century in a style with the name of a great architect ´s surname, Juan de Herrera ("Herreriano style"), when Felipe II was king. In this city crossed by Guadiana river, there are other bridges built in parallel to the one of Palmas, with names such as Bridge of the Autonomy, Bridge of University or Royal Bridge.



Puerta de Palmas



Palmas bridge, 16th century

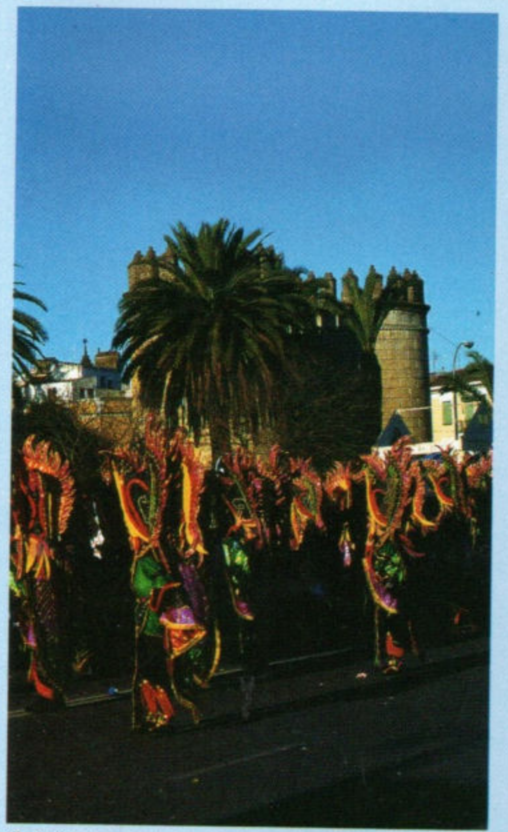
FESTIVITIES

CARNIVAL

It is declared Fiesta de Interés Turístico Regional (Regional Tourist Interest Festivity) and regarded as one of the best ones in Spain. It attracts thousands of visitants who take part in this marvellous festivity together with the dwellers of this city for 5 days.

EASTER

Moreover, this festivity is also declared Fiesta de Interés Turístico Regional (Regional Tourist Interest Festivity), with images of great artistic value. It is specially attractive the moment in which the "pasos" of the Brotherhoods pass by the streets of the city.



Carnival parade



Easter procession



Detail of a fancy dress

VIRGEN DE BOTOA´S CELEBRATION DAY IN THE COUNTRY

In an admirable landscape among holm-oaks woods, 17 metres far from Badajoz through San Vicente de Alcántara´s road, it is celebrated on the first Sunday in May and it congregates lots of people around the brotherhood of the city.

SAN JUAN´S FAIR

It is hold in June and it is the most famous fair in the region, with interesting bullfights and a great fairground where numerous visitants, including Portuguese people and dwellers among others, enjoy themselves.

International Festival of Contemporary Theatre, Iberian Festival of Music or International Festival of Extremadura (CIOF) are some examples of the interesting cultural offer that Badajoz presents during all the year.



Easter

GASTRONOMY

Lamb stews, Extremaduran Gazpacho, Migas, sardines and peppers, beans with hare or partridge, stew partridges, scrambled eggs with wild asparaguses ,"complete" stew, "Garlic" of fishes, salmorejo de bogas, conventual, homemade sweets.



Gazpacho and its ingredients

CRAFTS

The ceramist and goldsmiths and silversmiths of the capital are well known as well as the wood and wrought iron craftsmen and craftswomen. Beautiful embroideries and original works which are similar to the canons from ancient times can be purchased there too.



Handicrafts and tradition





1 **Palma Door**



2 **Las Descalzas convent**



3 **La Soledad's church**



4 **Agustine's convent**



5 **Citadel**



6 **Espantaperros Tower**



7 **Plaza Alta**



8 **Barracks of Calvary**



9 **Town Hall**



10 **Cathedral**



11 **MEIAC**



12 **Royal Bridge**

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